REGINA metro®

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

Russian ballet star gets 6 years for acid attack

The case put a spotlight on vicious backstage bickering at the Bolshoi PAGE 4

Less work, more productivity

Some companies are recognizing that successful employees must be able to escape from work in order to deliver more PAGE 6

From sunset cheers to cheap beers

Looking for some down and dirty fun? Key West is the place for you PAGE 10

FORGET KEVIN BACON, TRY SIX DEGREES OF LOVE ACTUALLY

WE PLAY 'WHERE ARE THEY NOW?' WITH 16 ACTORS FROM THE 2003 ROM-COM CLASSIC PAGE 8

PotashCorp cuts felt deeply

PotashCorp corporate headquarters in Saskatoon as seen on Tuesday morning, the day the company announced hundreds of job cuts. Inset, Premier Brad Wall speaks with the media in Regina to discuss the announcement.

MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON; INSET: ROSS ROMANIUK/METRO

Quick facts about Potash, PotashCorp and Saskatchewan

- Potash is mined and used primarily as an ingredient in fertilizer. Saskatchewan is the largest producer in the world, accounting for approximately 30 per cent of total production. The province hosts almost half of the global potash reserves.
- The Saskatchewan Ministry of Resources says in 2012, Saskatchewan produced 8.8-million tonnes of potash worth $6 billion. About 45 per cent of Saskatchewan potash exports go to the United States.
- Saskatoon-based PotashCorp was created as a Crown corporation by Allan Blakeney's NDP government in 1975 and was privatized by the Progressive Conservative government of Grant Devine in 1989. It has operations in seven countries.

Hundreds lose jobs in Lanigan. Company says decision stems from soft demand for crop fertilizer

There was shock Tuesday in a small town east of Saskatoon after PotashCorp of Saskatchewan cut hundreds of jobs at a mill.

The Saskatoon-based company is slashing its workforce by about 18 per cent, affecting 1,045 people.

The biggest job cuts will be in Saskatchewan, where 440 people will lose their jobs, and most of those will be at the company's Lanigan division, where one of two mills will suspend production by the end of the year.

"These layoffs were effective immediately. People were sent home this morning," said Rick Suchy, an electrician at the Lanigan mine and president of Unifor local 922. "It was a really shocking experience."

PotashCorp said the decision stems from soft demand for potash and phosphates, two major types of crop fertilizer.

The commodity and the companies that produce it have been hit hard this year after Russian-based Uralkali, one of the world's largest potash producers, quit the Belarusian Potash Company export partnership.

China and India — key markets for fertilizer — then delayed purchases in expectation of lower prices on the world markets, and that sent shipments plunging.

Suchy said the workers in Lanigan had an inkling that something was going to happen, but had hoped for the best.

"We've been running reduced tonnes here most of the year, since May, and everybody was kind of wondering how long can they hang on with this and keep everybody working," he said. "We've been running at about 60 per cent most of the year with full manpower."

PotashCorp was one of the biggest employers in Lanigan, a community of 1,500 about 125 kilometres east of Saskatoon.

The Saskatchewan government said it will try to help the workers. Premier Brad Wall said Tuesday that rapid response teams had been sent to help affected workers get new training to find other jobs.

"It's not insignificant, certainly," said Wall. "We're thinking first and foremost this morning about 440 people who got some very bad news. It's not a small number and more importantly, I think about them individually and the families that are involved here."

The province could also be impacted. Saskatchewan relies on revenue from sales of the pink mineral to help keep its provincial budget in the black.

From a fiscal standpoint, Wall said, the situation was worse in late 2008 and early 2009, when potash revenue tumbled along with the global economy, and that seriously affected the province's budget. Saskatchewan has since reduced its budget dependence on potash, said Wall. This year, potash accounts for 3.5 per cent of the $11 billion in revenue.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NEWS 1

STARS still flying in Sask., despite Manitoba suspension

Health. One of three critical incidents included the death of a woman transported by the helicopter service

There are no safety concerns about Saskatchewan's STARS air ambulance service despite a new suspension of the medical service in Manitoba, health officials say.

STARS Manitoba was suspended on Monday by the Manitoba government following three critical incidents, including the death of a woman transported by the helicopter service. The suspension was announced a day before a demonstration for media of STARS Saskatchewan's first rooftop heliport at Regina General Hospital.

"There would be nothing today to signal that we would need to change how STARS is operating in the province," Saskatchewan Health Minister Dustin Duncan told reporters on Tuesday at the hospital. "I wouldn't want to jump to conclusions based on what's happening in another province."

Duncan said the public in Saskatchewan has no reason to lose confidence in STARS, despite the concerns in Manitoba.

He added that he will have behind-the-scenes discussions with STARS and Manitoba's Health Department about whether Saskatchewan's practices must be changed following the incidents. The Alberta-based STARS, or Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society, has operated in Saskatchewan since the spring of last year and has responded to more than 600 incidents across the province.

The $3.4-million heliport is expected to make transport times 15 to 20 minutes shorter for STARS in the Regina area.

"Particularly for trauma patients where every minute counts ... we're going to save lives," said STARS medical director Dr. Terry Ross.

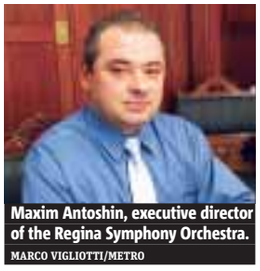
Ross, who said he reviews every call that STARS responds to, added that Saskatchewan's service has never dealt with a critical incident — that is, one in which the transport might have contributed to an injury or death. "At this point," Ross said, "I have no worries on how we do things here, as we're completely independent."

The hospital heliport will begin operating in mid-December. A similar heliport is planned for installation on the roof of Saskatoon's Children's Hospital, which has yet to be constructed, by the end of 2016.

SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO

STARS staff demonstrate their procedures with their new heliport on the roof of Regina General Hospital, after landing a helicopter there on Tuesday. Inset, Health Minister Dustin Duncan tells media there should be no safety concerns about STARS in Saskatchewan, despite a probe in Manitoba into the death of a patient and other problem incidents. SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO

Regina Symphony Orchestra still playing after 105 years



Maxim Antoshin, executive director of the Regina Symphony Orchestra. MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

It's one of the city's most renowned institutions, with an enviable global reputation as a premier training ground for world-class musicians. And it's celebrating a birthday.

On Tuesday, the Regina Symphony Orchestra (RSO) marked the 105th anniversary of its inaugural concert at the long-demolished City Hall Auditorium on Dec. 3, 1908.

"In fact, there's (only) one orchestra in Canada — in Quebec City — that's older than Regina's," said Maxim Antoshin, the RSO's executive director.

He noted that the Regina orchestra is the oldest continuously running symphony in the country.

Antoshin, a Russian national who took over as head of the RSO in 2011, explains that the symphony's roots are closely intertwined with those of a storied institution long-credited for spurring the development of early Regina — the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

RCMP officers, he said, were among the first members of the symphony, while Government House gardener George Watt played a crucial role as a founder and as an early musician.

However, it wasn't until Howard Leyton-Brown took the reins of the RSO in the 1970s that the symphony was transformed from a mainly volunteer outfit into a full-fledged professional orchestra.

After the war, Leyton-Brown, a violinist, became a concertmaster with the London Philharmonic before moving back to Saskatchewan in 1953 and eventually taking over as RSO music director.

MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

Science, reading, math

Sask. students keeping pace with international counterparts: Study

Saskatchewan students are keeping pace with their counterparts across the globe in science, reading and mathematics, according to an international assessment by the Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development.

The report, released on Tuesday and titled Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), shows 15-year-olds in Saskatchewan score above the international average in all three subjects, and rank fourth among provinces in science — a three-spot leap from the last such survey in 2009.

"While this is just one measure, it is encouraging to see Saskatchewan students improving," Education Minister Don Morgan said in a press release about the study, which measures and compares 65 countries.

However, NDP education critic Trent Wotherspoon said the report also shows that students in Saskatchewan are losing ground in a variety of categories.

"I see a mixture of results ... stagnation in many areas," Wotherspoon said, cautioning that he has had only a "cursory" glance at the results.

"This report would suggest that Saskatchewan students aren't doing as well as they were a few years ago."

Wotherspoon accused the government of failing students by under-funding schools and cutting back on resources, such as education assistants.

While acknowledging that work is needed, assistant deputy education minister Greg Miller said PISA is "encouraging" and shows students are making strides in core competencies.

"We know there's a lot of good things happening across the province," Miller added. "We're hoping to understand what's really working for kids." MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

Reform Act gets thumbs-up

Bill to give MPs more power. Grits and NDP say they would support Conservative MP's bill

A Conservative MP's provocative new bill to rebalance power between MPs and party leaders has gotten an early thumbs-up from the NDP and the Liberals.

With a number of Michael Chong's Tory colleagues already supportive, the measure could have serious legislative legs.

Among other things, the bill would give party caucuses the explicit right to review and oust their leaders.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau tweeted Tuesday that he shared the goals of Chong's proposed Reform Act of 2013.

NDP reform critic Craig Scott said he will personally support the bill and MPs in his party will be allowed a free vote on the legislation.

He said his leader, Tom Mulcair, "wants a system that's fair, where prime ministers actually don't have the kinds of levers of power that have been abused under Stephen Harper and have been used in ways that frankly aren't all that justified by previous prime ministers."

Chong is a moderate, popular Ontario MP with a long history of promoting stronger responsible government.

Conservative supporters included Alberta MP James Rajotte, Ontario MPs Larry Miller and Stella Ambler and Ontario Sen. Hugh Segal.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May and Independent MP Bruce Hyer rounded out the cheering section.

"It depends on whether Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Mulcair will allow their caucuses to vote for democracy," May said of the bill's prospects.

A Conservative source estimated that up to a quarter of the caucus could back Chong's proposals.

Chong argues that these rights have always existed by convention, but have not been exercised for decades.

The legislation would not come into effect until after the 2015 election.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

How it works

Reform Act's nuts & bolts

The bill has three components. It would give party caucuses in the Commons the right to vote to review the party leader and to trigger a leadership race.

As well, the bill would entrench in the Parliament of Canada Act the right of a caucus to review, eject and readmit MPs.

They would also have the right to elect and eject their caucus chair.

The third part of the bill would give electoral district associations the power to approve electoral candidates. Nomination papers would no longer require a leader's signature.

These measures would theoretically embolden MPs to vote as they want in the Commons, without fear of being turfed from caucus.

Sleep-deprived Dallaire dozes off at the wheel on the Hill

Sen. Roméo Dallaire nodded off at the wheel of his BMW and crashed into a traffic barrier on Parliament Hill Tuesday. Dallaire said news last week of three suicides of Canadian soldiers, coupled with the coming 20th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, have left him unable to sleep. "I am very thankful that nobody was injured or worse by my not being more attentive to the level of fatigue that I have been experiencing," he said in an apology. JENNIFER DITCHBURN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Education. Canadian teens' scores in math, science take a nosedive

A new international study ranks Canadian students among the top of the class in key subject areas, but there has been a noticeable decline over the years in math and science scores among the country's pupils.

Canada was among 65 countries and economies participating in the assessment by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which takes place every three years. Findings of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment from 2012 were released Tuesday.

The average estimated score in math was 494. Canada had 518. Shanghai, China topped the list in math with an average of 613. Canada was also outperformed by Singapore, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei, Korea, Macau, Japan, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

Canada had an average score of 523 in reading and 525 in science — well above the OECD averages of 496 and 501, respectively.

Shanghai topped the list in both reading and science with 570 and 580, respectively. Canada was outperformed in both subjects by Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and Korea.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Measuring up

Canada was among the high-level achievers, however:

- Performance in math has declined, with a 14-point dip in the past nine years.
- Decline in science performance since 2006 was "statistically significant."

Miraculous save

Dramatic rescue from sunken boat goes viral

A video from last May, in which divers looking for bodies in a sunken ship find a Nigerian cook who had been trapped alive for three days, is now on YouTube.

Harrison Odjegba Okene, who was in an air bubble in the sunken boat, survived off just one bottle of Coke, all he had to sustain him during the trauma. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Don't ask, he won't tell

Marion Barry mum on Ford

Don't you dare compare the former crack-smoking mayor of the U.S. capital to Rob Ford, the crack-smoking current mayor of Toronto.

Marion Barry doesn't appreciate it. In fact, he becomes quite irate when asked about Ford.

"I'm not talking about that," Barry said, walking away from a Canadian reporter Tuesday during a break at a D.C. council meeting. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Corruption

Fifth arrest in SNC-Lavalin case

The RCMP announced another arrest in connection with their probe into Canadian engineering giant SNC-Lavalin and a bridge contract in Bangladesh.

The RCMP said Zulfiquar Ali Bhuiyan, who holds both Bangladeshi and Canadian citizenship, has been charged with one count under the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Russian ballet star sentenced to six years for acid attack

A judge pronounced Bolshoi soloist Pavel Dmitrichenko guilty of making plans to attack Sergei Filin, the theatre's director who lost most of the sight in one eye and 20 per cent in the other in the attack on Jan. 17.

Ex-convict Yuri Zarutsky, who splashed the acid in Filin's face, was sentenced to 10 years; a driver, Andrei Lipatov, got four years. The three were also ordered to pay 3.5 million rubles (about $112,000) in damages to Filin.

The dancer said during the trial that he had agreed to Zarutsky's offer to beat up Filin, but claimed that he had been unaware of his intention to use acid for the attack. He pleaded not guilty but admitted "moral responsibility."

Dmitrichenko said he was shocked when he heard about the acid attack in the news and told Zarutsky they should surrender to the police. He testified that Zarutsky told him to keep silent and threatened to launch a similar attack on Dmitrichenko's ballerina girlfriend if he went to the police.

Dancer Pavel Dmitrichenko stands inside a barred enclosure at court in Moscow on Tuesday. ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

He said he had told Zarutsky that he disapproved of Filin's management style. He insisted that he always said Filin had been an excellent dancer, but he blamed him in part for the negative atmosphere in the theatre. He cited several incidents in which troupe members were driven to tears during heated conflicts with Filin.

A witness described Filin as a despotic leader prone to hysterical outbursts. Dmitrichenko, as described by several witnesses, was often the one to stand up for his fellow dancers and demand fair treatment and payment.

Filin did not deny the incidents but retorted that it was simply part of the "artistic process." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Germany

New software detects banned neo-Nazi music

German police say they have developed software that can automatically identify banned neo-Nazi music.

Certain extremist music is banned from public sale or performance in Germany, but the far-right still regularly attempts to skirt the regulations with concerts to attract and recruit young people.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Los Angeles

First traffic citation given to Google Glass user

A woman has pleaded not guilty to a traffic citation alleging the motorist was using Google's computer-in-an-eyeglass.

Cecilia Abadie was pulled over on suspicion of speeding and the officer tacked on a citation usually given to drivers who may be distracted by a video screen.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thai government tries to diffuse violent protests

A Thai policeman offers a rose to protesters outside city police headquarters in Bangkok on Tuesday. Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra ordered police to stop battling anti-government protesters in what has become a struggle to topple Yingluck and keep her brother, Thaksin Shinawatra, from returning to power. Thaksin was ousted in a 2006 military coup, and Yingluck's rivals have accused her of being his puppet. The conflict has killed four people and wounded more than 256 in the last three days alone. MANISH SWARUP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this February 2013 photo, masked men use a rear car seat as a shield during a protest to support Palestinian prisoners, outside Ofer, an Israeli military prison near the West Bank city of Ramallah. BERNAT ARMANGUE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Palestinians open to new alternatives in talks with Israel

Peace efforts. Diplomatic pressure that produced nuclear deal with Iran could be applied to Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but U.S. and Israel aren't sold

The call for emulating the "Geneva model" of negotiating — where world powers jointly wield the stick of negotiating sanctions — is a result of plummeting faith in the traditional formula of U.S.-mediated talks with Israel that have produced two decades of failures. With the current round in trouble, Palestinians are grasping at alternatives.

"What happened in Geneva is a model that proves that if the world wants something, then it can achieve it," said chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. "If they want to achieve peace and stability, then the (Israeli) occupation is no less dangerous than nuclear weapons."

In talks with six global powers, Iran agreed to freeze much of its nuclear program in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

Others around Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have made the same point in recent days, though Abbas himself has not spoken on the matter. He says he'll keep his promise to the U.S. to stay in bilateral talks with Israel throughout a nine-month period that ends in April.

Israel strongly opposes the idea of "internationalizing" the negotiations, fearing pressure from countries it considers less supportive.

U.S. officials have traditionally been cool to the idea of bringing in other mediators, arguing that only Washington has the necessary leverage and influence with both sides. "We're less than halfway through the nine-month timeline," U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Monday. "So our focus remains on the direct negotiations, and I don't think we're — at this point — speculating on a different alternative forum."

Peace efforts have been internationalized to a degree since the 2002 creation of the so-called Quartet of mediators comprising the United States, the United Nations, Russia and the European Union.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Current state of negotiations

There is a growing sense of urgency about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry returns to the region on Wednesday to meet separately with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who remain so far apart in their positions they haven't even met since negotiations resumed in late July.
- The atmosphere has grown extremely charged, in part because of Israel's accelerated construction in Jewish settlements on occupied lands the Palestinians want for their state.
- The Palestinians already have said that once the set period for talks is over, they will resume their bid for broader international recognition of a state of Palestine, accepted a year ago by the U.N. General Assembly as a non-member observer state.

A ticket loser, but still a $50M lotto winner

Just imagine. Regular lotto player Kathryn Jones is 'still in shock' after being told she won Lotto Max a year after losing winning ticket

A Hamilton, Ont., woman who lost her winning $50-million lottery ticket last year is on the verge of getting her prize after an extensive investigation.

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation says Kathryn Jones bought a ticket in Cambridge, Ont., last year which turned out to have the winning numbers from the Nov. 30, 2012, Lotto Max draw.

OLG received some 435 inquiries since that draw and in the process of reviewing them, it determined Jones had the winning ticket.

When Jones wasn't able to find her ticket, OLG carried out a "Lost Ticket Prize Claim" process to ensure she was the rightful winner.

It included using their database to verify her purchase, and checking surveillance video and credit card statements.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Unique case

"I'm very grateful."

Lotto Max winner Kathryn Jones, on the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation investigation that secured her a $50-million jackpot.

OLG CEO Rod Phillips, centre, and Mike Hamel, head of investigations, announce Kathryn Jones as winner of $50 million. OLG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trek to the South Pole raises cash for the military charity Walking With The Wounded

Team U.S. trudges through the snow on Day 1 of the Virgin Money South Pole Allied Challenge 2013 expedition. They are on a 321-kilometre charity trek to the South Pole alongside wounded servicemen and women. Team U.S. is one of three teams competing in the trek to raise money for the military charity called Walking With The Wounded. They are expected to reach the pole in mid-December having endured temperatures as low as minus 45C and 50 m.p.h. winds. VICTORIA NICHOLSON/WWTW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Plugged up. Those handy wipes may not be as 'flushable' as they claim

The pleas of Canadian wastewater officials to federal and provincial politicians for a crackdown on so-called flushable wipes are falling on deaf ears.

It's a municipal problem, so the refrain goes, and so the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association is joining forces with its American counterpart, the Water Environment Federation, to take aim at the popular towelettes.

The wipes — billed as a cleaner alternative to toilet paper that's perfectly OK to flush down the toilet — are giving many municipalities fits as they grapple with clogs.

Canadian municipalities say the wipes are costing ratepayers as much as $250 million a year.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hold on – don't flush!

Municipalities and officials have two objectives — a federal flushability standard and a widespread public-education campaign.

A mass of wipes that are supposed to be "flushable" held aloft by Barry Orr. They were clogging sewage pumps in London. DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Interview comments

Dylan facing hate-related charges in France

French authorities have filed preliminary charges against Bob Dylan over a 2012 interview in which he is quoted comparing Croatians to Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan.

The charges of "public insult and inciting hate" were filed against Dylan in mid-November, Paris prosecutor spokeswoman Agnes Thibault-Lecuivre said Tuesday. They stem from a lawsuit by a Croatian group over remarks made in Rolling Stone.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

United States

Ban on undetectable guns extended

The U.S. House of Representatives voted Tuesday to renew a 25-year-old prohibition against firearms that can evade metal detectors and X-ray machines.

On a voice vote, the House passed a bill to renew the Undetectable Firearms Act for another decade.

The American Senate could vote on the bill next Monday when it returns from recess. The law is due to expire the following day. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Word war. Selfie and science battle it out

Look alive, selfie. There's another word of the year that's not all about you.

While Oxford University Press, the British publisher of the Oxford dictionaries, declared those little smartphone self-portraits its winner last month, the folks at Merriam-Webster announced "science" on Tuesday.

Oxford tracked a huge jump in overall usage of selfie, but Merriam-Webster stuck primarily to look-ups on its website, recording a 176 per cent increase for science when compared with last year.

John Morse, president and publisher of Merriam-Webster Inc., said science is connected to broad cultural oppositions — science versus faith, for instance — along with the power of observation and intuition, reason and ideology, evidence and tradition. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Religious freedom

Notre Dame sues gov't over birth-control mandate

The University of Notre Dame is suing the Obama administration over a federal mandate that its health insurance plans for students and employees cover birth control. Notre Dame claims the mandate violates its freedom to practice religion without government interference. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 93.91¢ (-0.07¢)

TSX 13,319.87 (-99.70)

OIL $96.04 US (+$2.22)

GOLD $1,220.80 (-$1.10)

Natural gas: $3.98 US (no change)
Dow Jones: 15,914.62 (-94.15)

Yeah, I'm going to need you to stay home on Saturday

Promoting productivity. Bosses are forcing staff to put down the TPS reports and smartphones in a bid to fight burnout

Volkswagen turns off some employees' email 30 minutes after their shifts end. Goldman Sachs is urging junior staff to take weekends off. BMW is planning new rules that will keep workers from being contacted after hours.

This surge in corporate beneficence isn't an indication that employers are becoming kinder and gentler: It's about the bottom line. After years in which the ease of instant communication via email and smartphones allowed bosses to place greater and greater demands on white-collar workers, some companies are beginning to set limits, recognizing that successful employees must be able to escape from work.

Shirin Majid, left, watches as her husband plays with their baby at home. Majid works for a startup, which has "blackout" weeks for workers when they are forbidden to work. BEBETO MATTHEWS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Industry is now responding," said Cary Cooper, a professor of organizational psychology and health at Lancaster University, who says the imperative to be constantly reachable by iPhone or tablet is taking a toll on the work delivered at the office. "Employees are turning up, but they're not delivering anything."

After seeing colleagues lose their jobs during the Great Recession, workers are more inclined to come in to work, even when sick, surveys show. After hours, physical presence is replaced a virtual one. Many employees fear switching off, instead deciding to work on vacation, during dinner and in bed with the help of smartphones, laptops and tablet computers. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A quirky solution

To get everyone, from intern to CEO, to not overdo it with the work hours, some companies have resorted to bolder measures.

- Quirky, a New York based start-up that shepherds inventions to the marketplace, has instituted a "blackout" week once a quarter during which no one except customer-service representatives is allowed to work, lest employees be tempted to check email.
- And having the message come right from the top was important for Shirin Majid, the company's 39-year-old head of digital marketing, who laments not having enough time to spend with her husband and 9 month-old baby.

REUTERS/Erik De Castro

//// DEADLY TYPHOON DEVASTATES THE PHILIPPINES

AS MANY AS 10,000 FEARED DEAD. SURVIVORS NEED URGENT HELP NOW!

Super Typhoon Haiyan ravaged the Philippines, leaving a trail of destruction and death. More than 4 million children and families suffer in the wake. Many have lost everything and cling to life without access to basic necessities.

YOUR GIFT WILL RUSH ESSENTIALS SUCH AS FOOD, WATER, MEDICAL CARE AND SUPPLIES TODAY. PLEASE RESPOND IMMEDIATELY.

HUMANITARIAN COALITION //// Together saving more lives

care OXFAM Canada OXFAM Québec Plan Save the Children

The cost of this ad has been generously donated by: metro

//// CRISIS ALERT: Donate online at together.ca or call 1-800-464-9154

HELLO DRONES, RIP PIZZA-MAN PORN

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

Amazon Czar Jeff Bezos, overstimulated perhaps by Black Friday and Cyber Monday, has come up with what is either the best — or the worst — idea ever.

The man who sells everything everywhere to everyone proposes to use flying mini-drones to deliver packages to customers within 30 minutes.

Still in the virtual stage, it will be years before the bot turns up at your door seeking your signature, but we need to get ready.

I mean, there are questions to be answered.

Do you tip a drone? Seeing as they're not working their way through drone school or supporting a family of dronettes, it probably won't be necessary. But you want to make sure. Just ask the Taliban what happens when there's an angry drone at the door.

Will drones still leave those illegible notes behind? You know the ones scolding you for not being there at the drone's convenience and advising you to pick up your package at (can you read this?) at (is that between 9 and 5 or 5 and 9?)

Or, because they are programmed to hunt down your DNA, will they find you wherever you are even if you don't want to be found? Even if you really want the new 50 Shades of Grey Concordance, maybe you don't want it right now. On the toilet.

The delivery drone can be adapted for other uses. Pizza for instance. The drone is the perfect technology to get it to your door within 30 minutes or you eat for free. Of course, you'll never eat for free, as the drone can be programmed to get there in precisely 29.99 minutes every time. I'm not sure why they'd want to do that, but that's what happens now and it seems to work for the pizza delivery companies.

Added note: For some reason, the pizza delivery man occupies a special place in the annals of pornography. This would be the end of that. Tough to make out with the pizza man if he turns up sporting eight whirling rotors, like the Amazon prototype. There could be flying pepperoni ... at least.

That's hardly the most sinister adaptation of delivery-drone technology. These things are essentially CCTV cameras with wings. If they can send one into space (like the Hubble telescope) to track down galaxies 14 billion light years away, they can find you at the neighbourhood pub.

You see, the more you think about this, the more you realize there are bugs that have to be ironed out. Bezos hopes to get his little bots airborne in four to five years, but I suspect it will be a sunny day in Seattle before it happens.

Er, be right back. There's someone ... or something ... at the door.

ZOOM

Freaks of nature

TOMAS RAK, ALEXANDER SEMENOV/ANIMAL EARTH/THAMES & HUDSON

Bizarre animals revealed in book

They may not have the "Aw" factor of, say, pandas or sea otters, but these unique animals still deserve our attention.

A cynipid wasp and a sea slug called a nudibranch feature in Animal Earth, a new book that celebrates the weird and wonderful diversity on our planet. **METRO**

By the numbers

200M

The number of species of animals that are still undiscovered, according to zoologist and author of Animal Earth, Ross Piper. "We know a great deal more about the surfaces of barren moons in space than we do about our own planet. There are so many fascinating animals around us, and we haven't gotten to grips even the tiniest bit with how they live," he said.

More numbers

- **Unknown world.** 86 per cent of all species on land and 91 per cent of those in the seas have yet to be discovered, described and catalogued, according to a 2011 study.
- **Drop in the ocean.** Due to the abundance of life on our planet, the IUCN Red List — the most sophisticated ongoing project of studying threatened animals — monitors less than one per cent of the world's species.

Photog says:

"Sea slugs possess

every colour and shape combination imaginable — they are one of the most vibrant groups in the sea."

Alexander Semenov, 28, photographer and zoologist at the White Sea Biological Station in Karelia, Russia

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

As shoppers digest the announcement/confession/stunt that Amazon hopes to have flying robots deliver their goods, we take a look at other (real and not-so-real) drone delivery services:

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

TacoCopter:

Unveiled at tech conference Disrupt SF back in September, the TacoCopter was aerial robot designer Skycatch's answer to Californians' need for instant delicious Mexican food.

DomiCopter:

You guessed it. Domino's goes drone with the DomiCopter.

Oppikoppi music festival beer drop:

Since you can't have tacos or pizza without beer, there's a drone drop for that too. South Africa's Oppikoppi festival used GPS-guided drones to help music-lovers avoid long lines at the beer tent and drop cold brews to the parched brus.

Twitter

Merriam-Webster say searches for the word 'science' are up 176 per cent this year. What's the explanation for this?

@Ptwohig: The explanation is rooted in the confusion that exists over good & bad science as well as the politics of science. Climate change, fracking, pipelines, hydro development, Chris Hadfield, etc have all generated interest in science

@ommoran: Explanation? Students no longer sure what the word "science" means and having to "Google it".

@deekes11: I'm thinkin Breaking Bad has something to do with it #heisenberg

@AliciaMarie_09 maybe some awesome parents are showing girls there is more to life than twerking/selfies. Brains are sexy too!

@likeibother 176% is not a huge jump. It's actually just more than double. And it's taken from their own search web only

@myomichu Science sensationalized and turned into entertainment. Good for education but sometimes borderline fiction.

@cailiey I would bet @SarcasticRover has an idea why...he's currently doing a science on the red planet...

@LeosBandwagon isn't the answer clearly "science" itself #scienceisalwaystheanswer

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: reginaletters@metronews.ca

metro

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SCENE 2

A happy holiday accident: How Love Actually left a starry legacy

Cast of thousands. As Richard Curtis notes, even the then-lesser-known actors in his 2003 romantic comedy are now major stars

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Hugh Grant, as the British prime minister, and Martine McCutcheon, as his assistant, at a Christmas pageant in Richard Curtis' 2003 romantic comedy Love Actually. PETER MOUNTAIN/UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

Richard Curtis swears he didn't set out to make a Christmas classic with Love Actually — which just turned 10 years old — but that's what exactly happened. "I didn't really think that when I was writing the film. I certainly didn't think, 'This is a cunning commercial measure.' I just thought it was in the spirit of the film," Curtis tells Metro.

"Particularly in the States, I think it's become a Christmas thing. I think it's just kind of on a loop on some English TV stations (year-round), but I think it's become more of a Christmas thing. And it's delightful. I think you consider it lucky. I feel that a little bit about Love Actually, that I wrote a multi-thing movie, and because it was a Christmas one it looks like it's going to last."

What Curtis finds particularly entertaining is what's become of the film's massive cast, originally built as a mix of big stars (Hugh Grant, Emma Thompson) and lesser-known faces (Chiwetel Ejiofor, Andrew Lincoln).

"It now seems over-cast because half the cast weren't very well-known (at the time), only if you really watched English telly," he says. "And now with Martin Freeman being the Hobbit and with (Lincoln on) The Walking Dead and with January Jones on Mad Men and Chiwetel now I hope going to win an Oscar this year, the movie's looking increasingly unbalanced. There was meant to be a balance between people you knew and people you didn't. Even Thomas Sangster, who played the little boy, is now on Game of Thrones."

In that spirit, here's a look at what the ensemble of Love Actually have been up to lately.

The Prime Minister and Natalie

Hugh Grant: Currently filming The Man from U.N.C.L.E. for Guy Ritchie, Grant was last seen playing several nasty characters in Cloud Atlas and taking on Rupert Murdoch in the News of the World phone-hacking scandal.

Martine McCutcheon: A familiar face with U.K. audiences when the film premiered thanks to her work on EastEnders, McCutcheon will next be seen in the TV movie The Home Office.

Daniel and Sam

Liam Neeson: The esteemed Irish actor reinvented himself with 2008's Taken and has now become one of the most successful — if unlikely — action stars in the world.

Thomas Brodie-Sangster: The 23-year-old has grown up on TV and movie screens, with roles in Doctor Who and Nowhere Boy, and currently stars as Jojen Reed on Game of Thrones.

Jamie and Aurelia

Colin Firth: Already a fan favorite at the time thanks to Pride and Prejudice and Bridget Jones's Diary, the very busy Firth is now an Oscar winner for The King's Speech.

Lúcia Moniz: The Portuguese actress and singer has been working steadily on TV in her home country, most recently on Bem-Vindos a Beirais.

Harry, Karen and Mia

Emma Thompson: The actress with the most heartbreaking and memorable scene in Love Actually is also earning plenty of Oscar buzz for this year's Saving Mr. Banks.

Alan Rickman: Forever known to a generation of fans as Professor Snape in the Harry Potter series, Rickman recently starred as Ronald Reagan in Lee Daniels' The Butler and N.Y.C. nightlife guru Hilly Kristal in CBGB and will next take on King Louis XIV in A Little Chaos.

Heike Makatsch: The German actress has been working steadily in Europe for the past decade and can be seen in theatres now in The Book Thief.

Peter, Juliet and Mark

Keira Knightley: Already a star on the rise 10 years ago, Knightley is now an Oscar nominee who can next be seen in Can a Song Save Your Life? and Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit.

Chiwetel Ejiofor: After years of under-the-radar supporting roles, Ejiofor is a Best Actor hopeful this year for the powerful 12 Years a Slave.

Andrew Lincoln: Lincoln went relatively unnoticed for years until taking the lead role in TV's The Walking Dead, now in its fourth season.

Billy Mack and Joe the manager

Bill Nighy: The incredibly busy Nighy — who turns 64 this month — most recently reteamed with Richard Curtis for About Time and is set to start filming the sequel to The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel shortly.

Gregor Fisher: Fisher has been doing plenty of work on the small screen in Britain in series like Empty, Rab C. Nesbitt and Love Life.

The naked stand-ins

Martin Freeman: He was already a TV star in the U.K. 10 years ago thanks to The Office, but now he's both Watson on Sherlock and the Hobbit in, well, The Hobbit.

Joanna Page: The Welsh actress has worked steadily on TV in the last decade — most notably as Stacey on Gavin & Stacey — and most recently popped up as Elizabeth I on the Doctor Who 50th anniversary special.

TELL US YOUR TOP PICKS OF 2013
• Join the Metropolitan Panel to participate in our survey December 6th - 8th and share your favourites of 2013
• Results will be highlighted at the end of December in Metro!
• Plus, one lucky Metropolitan Panel member will WIN a Samsung Galaxy Tablet!
• For details on how to participate and win go to clubmetro.com
VISIT clubmetro.com TO ENTER
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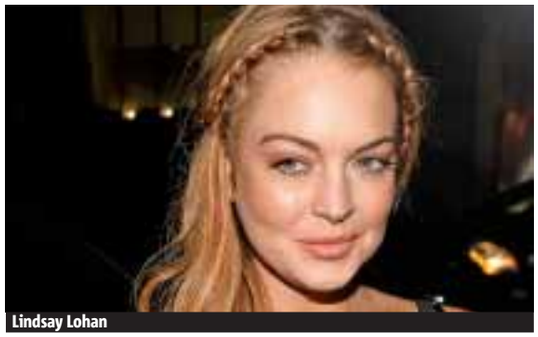

Lindsay Lohan

Lohan to sue Grand Theft Auto V over image rights

Lindsay Lohan is reportedly set to send her lawyers after the makers of Grand Theft Auto V because she believes they used her image without permission to create a character in the hugely successful video game, according to TMZ.

One part of the gameplay involves hiding a Lohan-esque character from the paparazzi, while another tasks players to photograph her having sex at a hotel that resembles Lohan's regular hangout the Chateau Marmont.

Lohan's lawyers are reportedly crafting a suit that demands significant compensation.

Diane Lane

She's no Lois, but Lane is single ahead of role in Superman flick

Josh Brolin and Diane Lane have finalized their divorce and are officially single, according to E! News.

The couple was married for eight years before Lane filed for divorce in February.

"It is very amicable," a source says.

"It's not ugly, it's just over."

Lane is currently gearing up to film Batman vs. Superman, while Brolin most recently checked himself into rehab for alcohol abuse.

Twitter

@Schwarzenegger
Traveled all the way to Tokyo to promote Escape Plan. Chef at the hotel is from my hometown! What are the odds?

@ElizabethHurley
Snuggling back under the duvet after having to let favourite Labrador out....

@lenadunham
Just saw a teenage couple rolling on the ground, the boy moaning in pain. Asked if they needed help and they bolted. And so it begins...

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Walker died on a 'hot spot for street racers,' say police

While the neighbourhood where Fast & Furious star Paul Walker died in a fiery crash is known to attract street racers, law enforcement officials do not believe the Porsche he and a friend were riding in had been racing another car.

Accident investigators "have received eyewitness statements that the car involved was travelling alone at a high rate of speed," the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in a statement Monday. "No eyewitness has contacted the (department) to say there was a second vehicle."

Walker and his friend and fellow fast-car enthusiast Roger Rodas died Saturday when Rodas' 2005 Porsche Carrera GT smashed into a light pole and tree, then exploded in flames. The posted limit was 45 m.p.h. (about 72 km/h).

The two had taken what was expected to be a brief drive away from a charity fundraiser and toy drive at Rodas' custom car shop in Valencia, about 30 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Walker's publicist said the action star was the passenger. The crash happened on a street that forms an approximately one-mile loop amid industrial office parks. It is rimmed by hills and relatively isolated from traffic, especially on weekends when the businesses are closed.

"It's well-known out here that that's a hot spot for street racers," California Highway Patrol Sgt. Rick Miler said.

Skid marks are a testament to past antics on the loop. The sheriff's department, which polices the neighbourhood, said Saturday's wreck was not the first speed-related crash there, but would not reveal specifics.

Meanwhile, investigators are consulting video from security cameras, talking to witnesses and analyzing physical evidence such as on-board computer data from the Porsche.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

George Clooney. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

George Clooney hasn't found the right woman

It turns out George Clooney just hasn't met the right woman yet. As part of a questionnaire by artist Tracey Emin used for a "text portrait" of the actor in W magazine, Clooney was asked who the love of his life is or was, and his response?

"I haven't met her yet."

But don't feel too bad for Clooney, as the hard-working actor has at least managed to find a way to avoid homesickness.

"I spend eight months a year in a one-bedroom hotel room in a city I probably wouldn't vacation in," he says.

"But no city, no space fails to be a home if your family and friends can find the time to visit. I get desperately, depressingly homesick if I can't find a way to be near the people that bring joy wherever they go."

Under the provisions of *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulations Act, 1997*

Notice is hereby given that CoCo Nail Lounge Inc.
(Name of applicant: individual/corporation, etc)

has applied to the Liquor and Gaming Authority for a Special Use - Salon Spa
(Tavern/Restaurant/Special Use/ Manufacturer)

Permit to sell alcohol in premises known as
CoCo Nail Lounge *(Name of establishment)* at 2nd Floor 3424 Hill Avenue Regina, SK *(Civic address ie: street/town)*

for which the following is a correct legal description:
(Describe accurately the location of the premises including lot, block and plan number and civic/street address)

The most south westerly 26 feet of Lot 15 Block 52 Plan No. FM 842

2nd floor – 3424 Hill Avenue, City of Regina, SK.

Written objections to the granting of the permit may be filed with SLGA not more than two weeks from the date of publication of this notice.

Every person filing a written objection with SLGA shall state their name, address and telephone number in printed form, as well as the grounds for the objection(s). Petitions must name a contact person, state grounds and be legible. Each signatory to the petition and the contact person must provide an address and telephone number. Frivolous, vexatious or competition-based objections within the beverage alcohol industry may not be considered, and may be rejected by the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Licensing Commission, who may refuse to hold a hearing.

Write to:
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority
Box 5054
Regina Sk S4P 3M3

LIFE 3

Only the best in sunny Key West

Party spot. Warm Florida town rivals New Orleans for wild street life and just plain old fun

JIM BYERS
@jimbyerstravel
jimbyerstravel.com

Sunsets at Mallory Square in Key West are an event with lots of drinking and wild applause. JIM BYERS/METRO

Wild, weird and utterly wonderful.

From sunset cheers to cheap beers, and from wacky parades to fine cuisine, Key West might be the only town in North America that give New Orleans a run for its money in terms of forget all your cares, down and dirty fun. Here's a look.

Doing

America doesn't mind selling guns to almost anyone, but they generally frown on sipping an adult beverage on a public street. Go figure. Lucky for you, Key West encourages us to take the libation of our choice and stroll down Duval Street, all the while wearing just about anything that might strike our fancy. Everything you've heard about this street is true; cross-dressers give you the come on as you parade past, tiny bars offer dollar beers (okay, American beers, but still) and gays and lesbians and transgendered folks mingle with gawking tourists from Peterborough and Pennsylvania. Crowds gather nightly at Mallory Square to watch the sunset and applaud the majesty. Tacky? Maybe. But tons of fun, and a great way to meet people. Duval is a parade almost any night, but it's especially wild around Mardi Gras and Halloween. Too much excitement? Try a wonderful, peaceful sail on a classic schooner. For $5, you'll get a 90-minute ride on the shimmering green waters of the Florida Keys. Free sodas and beer, wine or champagne for a buck. You also could retreat into the quiet of the beautiful, white St. Paul's Episcopal Church if you really want a respite.

Sleeping

Should you choose to actually go to bed, the options are endless. High end luxury types can opt for the Casa Marina, a Waldorf Astoria resort. Rooms aren't large in an old place like this but it's beautiful, and you can arrange for a dinner just steps from the sand. Rooms listed recently for $179 and up in December. Close to the action, but a world apart. Closer to Duval, but still far enough away, is the Key Lime Inn, part of the Historic Key West Inns group. The pool isn't fancy but the units are Florida chic and the folks friendly as can be. Rooms from about $159 in December.

Dining

Seven Fish is a dynamite spot near the Key Lime Inn, offering luscious fish, and, I'm told, excellent meat loaf. Looking for something more, well, Floridian? You can't beat the casual, outdoor dining at Blue Heaven, where one of the buildings used to be a bordello and where stray cats or chickens often roam among tables set under luxurious palms and a giant sail.

Drinking

Too many to mention. But try Sloppy Joe's on Duval or Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville. Other great spots include the Green Parrot on Whitehead St., which Playboy magazine once called the definitive Key West saloon.

Learning

Killed too many brain cells and need a jolt of something historical? Check out the Truman "Little White House" on Front Street to see where Harry S. himself did some of his work. Or look into the Hemingway Home and Museum, one-time hangout of the famous author and former Toronto Star correspondent, or the Key West Heritage House Museum and Robert Frost Cottage. Then, just to even things out, walk down to Duval, grab a Heineken and watch the party. My God, you didn't come to Key West to better your education, did you?

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aeroplan

Roll everything minus the kitchen sink into these sweet and salty treats

This is the cookie to make when you're looking to clean out the cupboards.

You'll pack them with all manner of treats — and oddities — from rolled oats, peanuts and chocolate chips to chopped prunes, crushed potato chips and even coffee grounds (trust us on that last one). The more unusual the combination, the better the results. But don't feel you have to stop there. Got any other crackers, chips, nuts or dried fruit handy? Toss them in and let these cookies truly earn their kitchen sink name.

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp previously brewed coffee grounds
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 3/4 cup chopped prunes
- 1 cup crushed wavy potato chips
- 1 cup salted peanuts
- 1 cup chopped bittersweet chocolate

1. Heat the oven to 350 F. Line a large baking sheet with kitchen parchment.

2. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together the butter, both sugars, baking soda, baking powder and salt until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, egg yolk, vanilla and coffee grounds. Stir in the flour, then stir in the oats, prunes, potato chips, peanuts and chocolate.

3. Working in batches, scoop one tablespoon-sized balls of dough onto the prepared baking sheet, leaving 2 inches between the cookies. Bake for 11 to 13 minutes, or until light golden brown. Allow the cookies to cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheet before transferring to a rack to cool completely. Allow the baking sheet to cool between batches. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sweet-and-Salty Kitchen Sink Cookies

This recipe makes four and a half dozen cookies. MATTHEW MEAD. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Drink of the Week

Bombay Butter Toddy

- 1 and 1/2 oz Bombay Sapphire
- 1/2 oz Drambuie
- 6 oz Mulled Apple Cider
- 1 knob butter

Mulled Apple Cider

- 2 L apple cider
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 4 orange slices
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp nutmeg
- 1 tbsp whole allspice
- 1 tbsp whole cloves
- 1/2 inch fresh ginger (cut into coins)

On medium heat, mull the apple cider for an hour. Stir occasionally. Add Bombay Sapphire, Drambuie and a knob of butter to mug. Pour in mulled cider. Garnish with cinnamon stick and apple slice. Use cinnamon stick to stir in butter as it melts into drink. TROY GILCHRIST/ BOMBAY SAPPHIRE

Freeze-dried strawberries add a potent blast of flavour

Strawberry Pistachio Icebox Cookies

This recipe makes five dozen cookies. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. In a medium bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together the butter, sugar, vanilla, baking powder and salt. Add the egg yolks and beat to combine. Stir in the flour until a dough just comes together. Stir in the strawberries and pistachios until evenly distributed.

2. Divide the dough in half. Using a sheet of waxed paper to help you work with the dough, shape each half into a log 1 1/2 inches around and 12 inches long. Wrap tightly and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.

3. When ready to bake, heat the oven to 375 F.

4. Place the sanding sugar in a dinner plate. Unwrap one of the logs and roll it in the sugar to coat the sides. Using a paring knife, slice the log into about 30 rounds. To prevent the log from losing its shape, turn the log a little with each slice. Working in batches, arrange the slices on a baking sheet, leaving 1 inch between them.

5. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes, or until golden brown around the edges. Transfer to a rack to cool completely. Repeat with the remaining log.

6. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup crushed freeze-dried strawberries
- 1 cup chopped shelled pistachios
- Sanding (coarse decorating) sugar

Dessert. Peanut Butter and Jelly Cookies

1. Heat the oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet with kitchen parchment.

2. In food processor, combine granulated sugar and golden raisins, then pulse until chopped to small pieces, but not a puree.

3. In bowl, beat brown sugar, peanut butter, eggs, vanilla and salt until thoroughly mixed. Mix in the sugar and raisins until evenly distributed.

4. Working in batches, scoop 1 tablespoon-sized balls of dough onto the prepared baking sheet, leaving 2 inches between cookies. Use a fork to make crosshatch design on the top of each cookie, slightly flattening them in the process. Bake for 11 to 13 minutes, or until light golden brown.

5. Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to a rack to cool completely. Allow the baking sheet to cool between batches. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 15-oz jar natural peanut butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt

Back away from the tech device and take it all in

Books without beeps. A professor pitches the idea of putting cellphones away in hopes of inspiring authentic interaction

VICKI SALEMI
Metro World News

Does the thought of putting your phone down for five minutes send shivers down your spine? Try four hours. ISTOCK

Pick a campus, any campus. As you stroll around, chances are you'll notice fewer students without a tech device than with them: all the more reason for Andrew Reiner, an English professor at Towson University, to teach his course, The Search for Intimacy in the Age of Facebook.

"As I started teaching at the college level, I was getting a vibe there was a lot of disconnect. Whether it was walking to dining halls, libraries or when I'd walk into class — there were endless amounts of phone activity and Facebooking."

Reiner's overall purpose was to help students find authenticity and springboard into relationships with others. He wants his students to disengage online to re-engage offline. For instance, Reiner has given students a tech-free assignment based on an essay from a book called The Sabbath. Reiner realizes that he can't deny students their technology, but he encourages them to become independent from it, taking a four-hour break from social media as part of the class.

"It's really not that long, but to them it was a lifetime," he explains. "They had to do something by themselves that did not involve homework or being plugged in and write a guided reflection. Reflections that came back spoke to a kind of disconnect from themselves."

In another recent assignment, students sat alone in a crowded lunchroom. They weren't allowed to use smartphones, laptops, do schoolwork, use social media or text. "The need to be in touch breeds hyper-conformity. You're like a pariah if you're not on Facebook for a day."

Describing it as a "very deliberate and conscious way" to defy technology, Reiner's goal is to teach students to be in control of technology and not the other way around.

"All it really requires is the willingness to impose some boundaries on the extent to which I get back to people and the speed at which I get back to [them]," he says. Reiner fears that not setting boundaries for technology may have dire implications for society. "I'm scared for our culture, for the world that my 2-year-old is entering into," he says. In order to set boundaries and reconnect with life offline — in addition to regular four-hour "Sabbaths" — Reiner recommends writing monthly letters to tell someone something you have wanted to share for "a few days, months or even years."

And make it meaningful, he recommends: "Tell them something that deeply matters to you, whether it's resentment, hurt or gratitude. … Frame the truth in an honest, respectful tone. [It's] about reconnecting with a deeper, personal authenticity and discovering that confrontation can be civil and productive without the stress."

Status update slow-down

"The need to be in touch breeds hyper-conformity. You're like a pariah if you're not on Facebook for a day."

Andrew Reiner
English professor

Students weigh in on letting go of technology

Leonard Randall Chisolm, college sophomore:
"Technology is great; it's a great way to stay in touch.

I think some people abuse it and at times I have abused it but there are some times you have to control yourself and say, 'Get me get back to the real world.' I'll go to the gym and leave my phone down for two or three hours and play basketball. I come back to my phone. I can be okay with it; there are one or two things you may miss but I don't think you're missing the whole world. Maybe you want to be the first person to see a funny video, see a funny picture or a game score but it's the internet so you'll always be able to find it somewhere."

Grace Delmar, university sophomore:
"I try not to use electronics like my phone when I am eating with friends, as I find it impolite and distracting from the present. However, if I am eating alone, it is a much different story. If I were sitting alone at lunch, I would be very uncomfortable without technology. I wouldn't really know what to do or look at."
"I think that's part of the fear of going without technology, though I also think it has to do with worrying about how other perceive you. Though some are comfortable eating alone, I am not, as I feel people might be judging me or feeling sorry for me. Though I'm sure this is not the case, I know many people at many different colleges who feel the same. Having a phone or computer out can be a distraction from this feeling, or it can make us feel more connected with friends and people who aren't there. Perhaps as a little self-esteem boost and a sense of comfort that we're not alone."

TalentEgg asks...

#QuestionoftheDay: Is it a bad idea to be Facebook friends with a professional contact? Why (not)?

- **@nikkiwray:** @TalentEgg Depends on company culture. I have been FB friends with my boss + team. We shared fun content on FB @ work! #questionoftheday
- **@mp256: @TalentEgg No.** I prefer to segregate my personal and professional life #QuestionoftheDay
- **@EDSPowell:** @TalentEgg I am Facebook friends with my long-time associate @mikerice. It's never been a problem – he sent me a cat picture on my birthday.
- **@ThatPrince:** @TalentEgg It depends on the circumstances. A lot of community managers become Facebook friends with co-workers to grant admin privileges
- **@Recruit_Campus:** @TalentEgg: #QuestionoftheDay!" Usually yes, I'd recommend waiting until one of you leaves the company before connecting!
- **@Tomiibecca:** @TalentEgg depends on your role. For managers who have people reporting to them its usually better to separate work/personal.

NHL

Sharks stay hot north of the border

The San Jose Sharks won their sixth consecutive game and ninth in their past 10, outshooting the Leafs 41-30 on their way to a 4-2 win in Toronto.

It was the Leafs' fifth straight loss.

Former Leafs forward Mike Brown, Joe Thornton, Brad Stuart and Logan Couture scored for the Sharks. Mason Raymond and Phil Kessel scored for Toronto. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Moneyball

Beane wheelin' and dealin'

Billy Beane is busy dealing in December once again.

In one whirlwind stretch of less than 24 hours, the Oakland general manager pulled off a trio of trades with three different clubs and upgraded Oakland's bullpen in the process.

The A's acquired AL saves leader Jim Johnson, right-handed reliever Luke Gregerson and outfielder Craig Gentry in trades all since Monday night.

Oakland also is waiting on lefty Scott Kazmir's physical to finalize a $22-million, two-year contract. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Skiing

Vonn could return at Lake Louise

Lindsey Vonn has been cleared to begin World Cup downhill training.

The U.S. Ski Team team said that a decision on whether Vonn will return to competition at Lake Louise will be made after Thursday's training session. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CFL

Als end wait, name Weightman team president

After leaving the president's office vacant for 18 months, the Montreal Alouettes opted to hire from within.

The club announced Tuesday that Mark Weightman, the former Chief Operating Officer, will be the new president and CEO. THE CANADIAN PRESS

With a 2-2 record, Rachel Homan's Ottawa rink is still in the mix at the Roar of the Rings Olympic curling trials in Winnipeg. JOHN WOODS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jones, Sweeting are sweeping successes

... so far. Pair share lead at Roar of the Rings with crucial draws coming up

Two teams share the top of the standings on the women's side at the Canadian Olympic curling trials going into play Wednesday.

Jennifer Jones and Val Sweeting sat at 3-1 after Tuesday's draw.

Sweeting is technically in the lead, thanks to handing Jones her only loss so far. But at this point, it's what happens next that all 16 teams know matters most.

"It will be the turning point Wednesday, Thursday, obviously," said Heather Nedohin, who handed Sweeting her first loss with a last rock draw to win a tight game 6-5.

"I don't think anyone at the trials ever has done this undefeated," said Sweeting.

"I thought we just got outplayed."

Both teams curl out of the Saville Community Sports Centre in Edmonton.

Nedohin sits in a four-team logjam below the leaders at 2-2 with Renee Sonnenberg and Sherry Middaugh at 1-3, and unlikely to move on.

"Three losses is going to be tough to make it in," said Sonnenberg.

"If we can finish above .500 that's a feather in our hat too."

Jones dominated Sonnenberg from start to finish Tuesday shaking hands at 7-2 after the eighth. It was a solid comeback after Monday night's 9-6 loss to Sweeting, which included a disastrous four in the seventh end.

"I don't know if we gave it away, we just made too many mistakes so it wasn't our best effort," said Jones.

"I thought we bounced back as well as we could have today."

Saskatoon's Stefanie Lawton earned her second win with a 7-5 decision over Winnipeg's Chelsea Carey and in an all-Ontario game. Sherry Middaugh bowed 6-5 to Rachel Homan in an extra end. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Men's side

"Nobody's going through undefeated."

Kevin Martin, who was tied with Brad Jacobs atop the men's leaderboard at 3-0 going into Tuesday night's evening draw.

NHL. The Great One scores $8M settlement

Wayne Gretzky at the Capitals-Canadiens game in Washington on Nov. 22. GREG FIUME/GETTY IMAGES

The NHL has reached a settlement with Wayne Gretzky to pay him money owed from his time with the Phoenix Coyotes, multiple source with knowledge of the situation told The Canadian Press.

It was worth close to $8 million US, according to one source, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Gretzky was owed money from former Coyotes owner Jerry Moyes. He filed for bankruptcy in 2009, leading to the NHL's ownership of the team until it was sold to a group led by Canadian businessmen this past summer.

Gretzky had served as coach and head of hockey operations before the Coyotes went bankrupt.

He made an appearance on the red carpet at last month's Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremony at the insistence of Chris Chelios. Since then, he was seen at a Washington Capitals game sitting with owner Ted Leonsis.

But Gretzky hadn't been officially involved with the NHL since the Coyotes situation.

"I'm always close to the game," Gretzky said last month at the Hall of Fame. "The game's always been good to me. The National Hockey League commissioner's office, they have always treated me with a great deal of respect and always been good to me. I've chosen at this point in time to take a step back and be a fan like everyone else and watch." THE CANADIAN PRESS

4 SPORTS

2014 Kia Soul

Review. Still quirky, but with a beefier body and classier interior

MIKE GOETZ
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ALL PHOTOS KIA

When quirky vehicles get their number called at the redesign department deli, they present an interesting dilemma to their design teams. How do you modernize or update them without making them too pretty?

It's much like Keith Richards — you don't want to smooth the hair, button the shirt up, or have him throw on more understated and elegant earrings, so he stops looking like a pirate. People love the pirate! So Kia did what it could only do when redesigning its quirky Soul for 2014 — change everything else except that iconic shape, face and tailgate.

The tailgate design was originally conceived around the idea of a backpack, and looks even more backpack-like this time around. The 2014 Soul is slightly longer and wider and lower than the outgoing model. Losing a bit of that top-heavy look and feel, and moving to a beefier platform, with lots more high-strength and ultra high-strength steel, have created a Soul that handles so much more proficiently and smoothly and quietly than the outgoing model.

Kyle Buller, the product planning supervisor at Kia Canada, says there is just as much high-strength steel in the new Soul as there is in the Audi A3. He adds that the size of the Hyundai-Kia group has enabled it to own and operate its own metal foundry. "We're able to source high-strength steel internally, which really helps in pricing." Buller said Kia initially aimed the Soul at younger buyers, but older folks have gravitated to them because they are so easy to get in and out of… They also give empty-nest baby boomers that tall-in-the saddle-feel of regular SUVs, but without the huge gas bill.

The interior has an upscale feel and a circular theme.

My baby boomer bones agree. The front door is nice and big, and it's easy as pie to slide over to the cushy driver's seat. The entire interior is a fantastic leap from the previous model, which was known for its cheap-feeling interior. This interior is upscale in feel, and entirely conceived in a "circular" theme. Everything that can be made into a round shape had been made into a round shape. Even the steering wheel is round! Okay, so that was a no brainer, but the wheel is really great too, with a very chunky and substantial feel.

The rear tailgate is very light and easy to use. But the load floor is quite high, which eats up a bit of storage space. And the rear seats don't entirely fold forward flat.

Both engines feature state-of-the-art direct injection (GDI in Kia-speak). The base 1.6-litre makes 130 hp and 118 lb-ft of torque, so it's not a rocket, but certainly adequate and certainly fuel-efficient: its City/Highway L/100 km ratings for automatic models are 8.6 and 6.5. The upgrade 2.0-litre engine features dual-cam variable timing, and produces 164 hp and 151 lb-ft of torque, and when hooked up to the 6-speed automatic does the City/Highway thing at 8.8 and 6.5. This engine is also available in an ECO mode, which automatically shuts the engine down at idle (and restarts it soon as you hit the gas). The 2.0-litre in ECO trim knocks the city rating down to 8.4 L/100 km.

The Soul represents pretty good value; especially as it more distinctly styled than most any else you could buy under $20,000. The base LX starts at $16,995, while an automatic LX goes for $18,595. But most people will gravitate to high optioned trims, such as EX ($20,795), EX+ ($21,995), SX ($23,595), and SX Luxury ($26,995). It's hard to not like the Soul. Great style, great utility, very decent on-road performance, fuel economy, and value. And my colleagues seem to agree. Fellow AJAC members have just named it a 2014 Car of the Year in its segment for Best New Family Car Under $30,000.

2014 Kia Soul

- **Type.** Five-door, front-wheel-drive, compact "tall" wagon
- **Engines (hp).** 1.8-litre DOHC I4, (130), 2.0-litre DOHC I4 (164)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed manual and six-speed automatic
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $16,995

Design

The look has changed little from the previous model, which was originally conceived as the automotive equivalent of a British Bulldog wearing a backpack. Slight lower, longer and wider proportions suggest better on-road performance.

Compare

1. **Nissan Juke**
   Base price: $19,998
2. **Scion xB**
   Base price: $18,960

The AJAC Car of the Year finalists

The Automobile Journalists Association of Canada has narrowed down 36 potential winners to 12 finalists for the 2014 Canadian Car of the Year Award. A group of 80 AJAC members — journalists representing news outlets from coast to coast — test-drove 174 vehicles during a week-long series of trials in Niagara Falls this past October.

The annual fall new auto test event is conducted to evaluate the vehicles in the dozen categories on the same day, over the same route, including a high-speed test circuit and/or a simulated off-road course or cottage road, depending on the category.

Testers ranked a wide range of attributes covering design, space, quality, performance, safety, economy and value. Professional test drivers also graded every vehicle for acceleration from rest and for passing acceleration and braking.

Transport Canada fuel consumption figures were also factored in. Vehicle traits are weighted differently in the various categories, taking into consideration that aspects like acceleration are more important for a sports car than a pickup truck. The vehicle's price is also considered in the sense that expensive vehicles should naturally offer better performance and style than lower-priced wheels.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

12 Category finalists

- **Small Car (under $21k):** Mazda 3
- **Small Car (over $21k):** Mazda 3 Sport
- **Family Car (under $30k):** Kia Soul
- **Family Car (over $30k):** Mazda 6
- **Luxury Car (under $50k):** Lexus IS 350 RWD
- **Luxury Car (over $50k):** Infiniti Q50 Hybrid
- **Sports/Performance ($50k+):** Chevrolet Corvette Stingray
- **Prestige Car (over $75k):** Mercedes-Benz S Class
- **SUV/CUV (under $35k):** Jeep Cherokee
- **SUV/CUV ($35k to $60k):** Kia Sorento
- **SUV/CUV ($60k+):** Acura MDX
- **Pickup:** GMC Sierra

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will hear something amazing today but can you believe it? If it sounds too good, check it out first. Commit too soon and you could find you've signed up for something that does you no good.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
The only thing to fear is fear itself, so put your doubts behind you and plunge headlong into the unknown. That might not sound like a typically Taurus thing to do but, what have you got to lose?

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Someone in a position of power thinks you're pretty special and if you are smart you will play up to it and make it pay. Use your way with words to get a promotion.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
If someone is difficult to get along with today, you should make it your business to find out why. Most likely it is nothing too serious and may even be something you are able to help with.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You may have no particular interest in the chores you are expected to do today, but do them anyway and make sure you do a good job. Come the weekend, you will be free again to pursue your own interests.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Family relationships are under favourable stars, so reach out to someone you love and let them know how you feel. Some say Virgos are cool, so now is your chance to prove them wrong.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Use your head today, especially when dealing with people who tend to get emotional over trivial matters. No matter how agitated they may get, you must stay focused on the facts.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may have deep feelings about a situation but you must not let emotions get in the way of what needs to be done. Yes, of course, love makes the world go around but it needs a dash of common sense too.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
If a tough decision is called for, you must make it and live with the consequences. The planets warn the worst possible thing you can do is to hedge your bets. Come down on one side of the fence or the other.

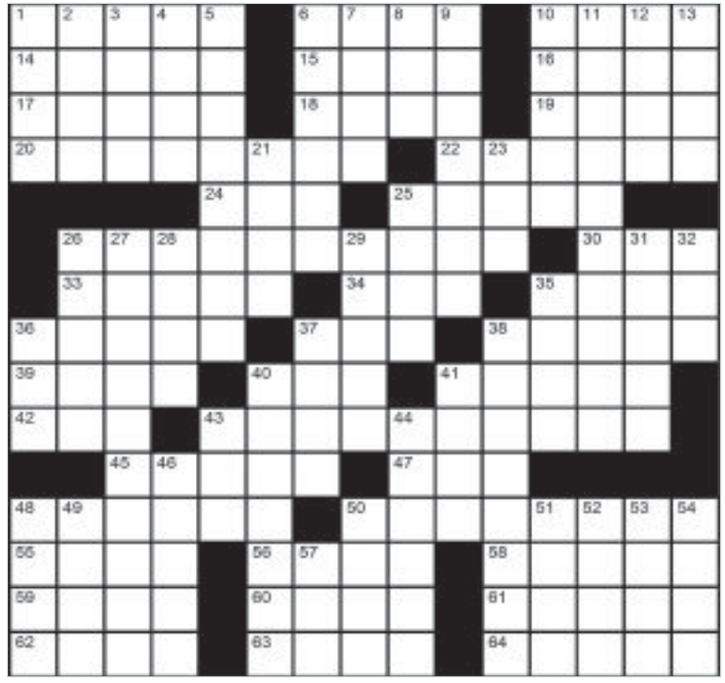
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Act rationally today, even if it gets you a rep as someone who is all head and no heart. Experience has taught you that people who follow only their emotions usually end up with nothing worth having.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Don't make any hasty decisions today. You may believe you know all the facts but the planets warn there is one little thing you have overlooked — and that one little thing could have very big consequences.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Someone who has a lot more experience than you could be of help today, but you need to remember that they can't read your mind. Spell things out for them. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

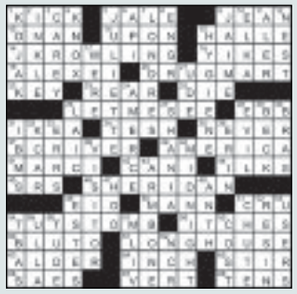
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Show about Mary, Queen of Scots on which Megan Follows plays Queen Catherine
6. Denied club entry because of it, e.g.: __ _ _
10. Carpentry wedge
14. Gluck opera: __ ed Euridice
15. Consequently
16. "I thought we __ _ deal?"
17. Mr. Eastwood
18. Linguist Mr. Chomsky
19. Jealousy
20. Edmonton-born actress Jill
22. Appearances
24. Scrooge's seasonal sentiment
25. Confusion-causing mess
26. Thomas Mulcair, Leader of the __
30. Pressure meas.
33. Greek Myth: Crete's bronze guardian
34. Ancient Egypt: Sun god's namesakes
35. Look over
36. Mike Myers character
37. __ the Record Man
38. Cook's creations
39. Prefix meaning 'Trillion'
40. Illinois city, for short
41. Rings loudly
42. Jimmy
43. Charlie the __ (Creature on Prime Minister Harper's annual Christmas card)
45. Ms. Jessica Parker
47. Small, small-ly
48. Bruce of "Dragons' Den"
50. Brian __, Canadian sportscaster
55. __ monde (High society)
56. Sandwich time
58. Provide
59. "__ __ way, shape or form!"
60. Util. bill
61. Serviceable
62. Subtraction opp.
63. Mascara spot
64. Routines

Down
1. Mr. Voisine
2. Perry Mason creator, __ Stanley Gardner
3. "__ __ doubt..."
4. West Coast painter, Robert __
5. Rachel McAdams/Ryan Gosling movie, "The __" (2004)
6. Mayor of Calgary, Naheed __
7. '___ Plata' (Montana's state motto)
8. Grocery store chain
9. Pizza chain
10. Bundle
11. Upon answering the phone, hearing 'click': 2 wds.
12. '50s song: "If I Knew You Were Comin' __ Baked a Cake"
13. "Ain't That the Truth" by Canadian rocker Matt __
21. Back talk
23. Earth inhabitant
25. Thailand, formerly
26. Survey selection
27. Ontario town on Georgian Bay: 2 wds.
28. Entreaty
29. Public transport
31. Dance style
32. Advantages
35. Sigil
36. '90s gr.
37. __-Tzu (Cute dog)
38. Food Labels: Best Before... = __ Avant...
40. Station
41. __ and Don, The Everly Brothers
43. __-Magnon
44. Settle the deal
46. Country great Hoyt
48. Christmastime 'pet'
49. Author Ayn
50. Troubles
51. Keen on
52. Mine entrance
53. Donkey/horse
54. Spots
57. 'Pay' suffix

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	4	8		1	7	9		
	6				2			8
			3	8				
		5				2	4	
			8		1			
	1	7				8		
				3	4			
4			9				6	
		9	5	2		4	7	

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	8	1	3	5	6	2	9	4
6	5	9	8	4	2	7	3	1
3	2	4	1	7	9	6	5	8
4	9	2	5	3	1	8	6	7
8	7	3	6	9	4	1	2	5
1	6	5	7	2	8	3	4	9
5	1	7	9	6	3	4	8	2
9	4	6	2	8	7	5	1	3
2	3	8	4	1	5	9	7	6

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